

I also favor the language included in the House of Representatives fiscal year 1999 Department of Defense authorization bill that provides for the separation of men and women in training at the basic level. Echoing my priority in this regard, the Kassebaum report concludes:

... separating the recruits at the operational training unit level should provide a better environment for teaching military values, including professional relations.

Again, the bottom line must be about ensuring that military service is a profession of service, honor, and integrity. Let us also remember this—let me say it again—the purpose of our Military Establishment, which costs us scores of billions of dollars, is to protect the national security of these United States, the security interests of the United States of America.

Our military is not an equal employment opportunity commission. It does not exist to ensure perfect political correctness by responding affirmatively to the demands of this group or that interest group or some other interest group. It is the ultimate protector of the sovereignty of this mighty Nation and the ultimate protector of the freedoms of her people. That is quite a heavy responsibility and one that needs the most conscientious and vigilant attention to be adequately addressed.

Mr. President, I urge my colleagues to join me in taking a constructive first step towards cleaning up the mess in the military and putting some common sense back into the service training regime. I like the way the Marines do it. And I think we ought to take a page out of their book.

Mr. President, I will have more to say possibly on this amendment. As of now, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, in the debate on the Brownback amendment yesterday some Armed Services Committee members observed that the Brownback amendment would adopt recommendations of the Kassebaum/Baker commission report by passing the Senate's own commission created last year. It was said that doing so makes a "mockery" of the Senate's own action, and wastes the time of the 10 members of the commission.

Well, Mr. President, Secretary Cohen has flouted the recommendations of the Kassebaum/Baker report that he himself commissioned. He has promised to implement the easiest recommendations in that report while publicly repudiating its core recommendations. He has not waited for the Senate commission's report either. He got out in front of it.

Senator BROWNBACK's amendment, and the amendment that I have prepared, would say if you are in for a penny, you are in for a pound. If the report has merit—and Secretary Cohen has acknowledged that at least parts of it do have merit in his estimation—then we ought not to reject those parts of the report that do not seem politically correct. In fact, the Kassebaum/Baker report notes that "the committee has made recommendations regarding gender integration in training where appropriate, but has also made recommendations regarding the large number of other issues that we concluded have an impact on the effectiveness of the overall training program. It is the committee's intention that its recommendations be viewed as a complete package since training is a building-block process beginning with the quality of the recruit."

Other Members have reported the objections of senior military officials to the recommendations in the Kassebaum/Baker report. And they have stated their strong support for keeping mixed-gender training just the way it currently is.

I would remind those officials and my colleagues that not so long ago the military trained women completely separately from men. It was only since the early to mid-1980's that the military began mixing the sexes during the early training phases. I believe, if I recall it correctly, that Army women were trained together at Fort McClellan, which is now closing as a part of the base realignment and closure process.

The great social experiment of putting men and women together from day 1 in the training process is not, therefore, some hallowed military tradition. It is a policy, and if that policy gets in the way of a process that is designed to remold these undisciplined young individuals into focused disciplined soldiers, then we should not hesitate to change it.

Our focus must be on national security—not political correctness; not social policy. And the basic safety and security of our recruits should not be compromised.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that my amendment may be temporarily laid aside so that others may call up other amendments.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. THURMOND addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

PROVIDING FOR AN ADJOURNMENT OF BOTH HOUSES

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the consideration of H. Con. Res. 297, the adjournment resolution, which was received from the House.

I further ask consent that the resolution be agreed to, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 297) was agreed to.

The concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 297

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring). That when the House adjourns on the legislative day of Thursday, June 25, 1998, it stand adjourned until 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday, July 14, 1998, or until noon on the second day after Members are notified to reconvene pursuant to section 2 of this concurrent resolution, whichever occurs first; and that when Senate recesses or adjourns at the close of business on Friday, June 26, 1998, Saturday, June 27, 1998, or Sunday, June 28, 1998, pursuant to a motion made by the Majority Leader, or his designee, in accordance with this concurrent resolution, it stand recessed or adjourned until noon on Monday, July 6, 1998, or such time on that day as may be specified by the Majority Leader or his designee in the motion to recess or adjourn, or until noon on the second day after Members are notified to reconvene pursuant to section 2 of this concurrent resolution, whichever occurs first.

SEC. 2. The Speaker of the House and the Majority Leader of the Senate, acting jointly after consultation with the Minority Leader of the House and the Minority Leader of the Senate, shall notify the Members of the House and the Senate, respectively, to reconvene whenever, in their opinion, the public interest shall warrant it.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 1999

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

Several Senators addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, we are working on a unanimous consent agreement, and orally we have at least agreed that Senator FEINGOLD would speak on his amendment for about 20 minutes, and Senator ABRAHAM wants to speak for 10 minutes. We are proceeding with the unanimous consent agreement. We think we can get things done in about an hour and a half, and final passage. We are moving forward on that.

We will be voting on Senator BYRD's amendment pretty much after he feels that everyone has spoken. But at the moment, we should move forward, I think, with the Feingold amendment.

I yield the floor.

Mr. FEINGOLD addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Thank you, Mr. President. I thank the senior Senator from Arizona. I will use some of the 20 minutes that I have been allocated at this time and then reserve some of it in order to respond to whatever arguments are made about the position of the amendment.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, will the Senator yield just very briefly without losing his right to the floor?

Mr. FEINGOLD. I will be happy to yield.